THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It would not be in the national interest to give details of such joint exercises.

(d) No, Sir. No such joint exercises have been carried out recently between India and Pakistan.

(e) Does not arise.

Setting up new Coast Guard Stations

792. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to set up 10 new coast guard stations along different coasts of the country to check the rising smuggling activity and to facilitate greater maritime operations;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) whether the Ministry has got the approval from the Ministry of Finance?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) A proposal to set up 10 new Boat Stations by Coast Guard in a phased manner is being processed. The places tentatively selected are :—

West Coast -Vadinar (Gujarat), Jafarabad or Pipavav (Gujarat), Ratnagiri (Maharashtra), Bhatkal or Malpe (Karnataka), Beypore (Kerala) and Kavaratti in Lakshadeep.

East Coast - Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh), Gopalpur (Orissa) and Pondicherry.

Andaman & Nicobar - Kamorta.

Induction of IL-78 Aircraft

793. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) by when the Indian Air Force will induct IL-78 aircraft;

(b) by when the Air Force is going to get Mirage 2000 fighters fitted with air-to-air refuelling capability; and

(c) what are the obstacles in inducting the above aircrafts into the Indian Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The Indian Air Force propose to procure IL-78 Flight Refuelling Aircraft (FRA). These will be delivered by December, 2003.

(b) It would not be in the interest of national security to disclose this information.

(c) There are no obstacles.

Propriety of Decorating Tainted Officer

794. SHRI C.O. POULOSE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air Marshal M.S. Sekhon was presented the Param Vishisht Seva Medal;

(b) whether it is also true that Shri Sekhon was made to retire prematurely after the revelation of his seeking political help for his career promotion;

(c) if so, whether there is any impropriety in decorating such tainted officers with such prestigious awards; and

(d) comment of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Air Marshal M. S. Sekhon had put in distinguished service of over 39 years, during which he was awarded Vir Chakra, Vishisht Medal (Gallantry) and Shaurya Chakra. His single act of indiscretion was not ignored and he was immediately removed from Southern Air Command and retired compulsorily. However, considering his life time achievement and distinguished service of most exceptional order to the Indian Air Force and to the nation, he was allowed to receive the PVSM award.

Proposal for Amending Human Rights Act

795. DR. ABRAR AHMED:

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received proposals for amending Human Rights Act;